



**Convention on the Elimination
of All Forms of Discrimination
against Women**

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COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Eighteenth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 377th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 2 February 1998, at 10.15 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. KHAN

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Combined second and third periodic reports of Indonesia

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The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 18 OF THE CONVENTION (continued)

Combined second and third periodic reports of Indonesia (CEDAW/C/IDN/2-3; CEDAW/C/1998/I/CRP.1/Add.3)

1. At the invitation of the Chairperson, Mr. Wibisono and Mr. Wibadswa (Indonesia) took places at the Committee table.

2. Mr. WIBISONO (Indonesia), introducing the combined second and third periodic reports of Indonesia, on behalf of the Minister of State for the Role of Women, who had been unable to travel to New York because of the financial crisis with which the country was faced, said that Indonesian women had attained equality before the law and had the same status, rights, obligations and opportunities as men. Owing to the multi-ethnic and multi-religious nature of Indonesian society, however, discrimination against women and violations of their human rights still persisted.

3. Through the Office of the Minister of State for the Role of Women and other means, the Government was striving to achieve de facto equality for women at all levels of society. The report now before the Committee had been widely disseminated and programmes to eradicate discrimination in all its forms were being formulated under the Seventh Five-Year Development Plan (1998-2003) and the Second Long-Term National Development Plan (1993-2018). The Government had also taken special measures, such as literacy and other training programmes, to accelerate the achievement of equality for women. In addition, it had enacted legislation for the protection of women's rights and reproductive functions.

4. With the help of community groups and non-governmental organizations, the Government, through the Office of the Minister of State for the Role of Women, was monitoring and promoting the implementation of the Convention. A planning and foreign affairs unit had been created in 1994 to further improve coordination with government agencies and social groups. At the regional, provincial, municipal, district and village levels, officials were instructed to coordinate their activities for enhancing the role of women and to serve as local extensions of the Office of the Minister of State. Local officials were also required to provide the infrastructure, facilities, human resources and budget needed to support the coordination mechanisms.

5. The text of the Convention and the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women had been translated into Indonesian and distributed to every government agency and non-governmental organization, particularly women's organizations, at both the central and regional levels. National activities to follow up the outcome of the Beijing Conference were consistent with the national Guidelines of State Policy for the enhancement of the role of women, which placed emphasis on poverty, education, health and empowerment. As a consequence of the 350 years of Indonesia's colonization, women lagged far behind men in most aspects of education, health and social welfare. Based on the country's past

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experience, measures had therefore been taken to bridge the gap between men and women in national development, including in such areas as national defence.

6. Trafficking in and the exploitation of women were not regulated by special legislation and State action was based on existing laws. The Ministry of Social Affairs provided rehabilitation services for women who were victims of such exploitation. In order to promote respect for human rights in general, Indonesia had established a National Commission on Human Rights, which operated as an independent agency. Nevertheless, many violations of human rights, specifically women's rights, still occurred, and increased efforts would be made to promote and protect human rights at all levels.

7. While no legislative provisions barred women from participating in public life, because of traditional norms, few women held positions of responsibility in public life. A number of training programmes were being organized and specific measures taken in various areas, including the revision of legislative provisions that perpetuated discrimination against women, ratification of international human rights instruments, imposition of heavier penalties on persons found guilty of human rights violations, increased advocacy activities and development of the concept of harmonious gender partnership between men and women.

8. Indonesia supported the Committee's efforts to monitor implementation of the Convention and approved of the amendment to article 20 of the Convention to allow the Committee to hold two three-week sessions each year.

9. On the subject of Indonesian migrant workers, most of whom were women, that phenomenon grew out of the Government's inability to accommodate the large number of new arrivals onto the internal labour market each year. Migrant workers, however, faced a number of obstacles overseas, including ill-treatment by their employers, unfamiliarity with local social and cultural norms, unscrupulous middlemen, lack of protection from sending and receiving States and the migrants' own lack of skills. In response to that situation, the Government had taken a number of initiatives, including a review of the system of manpower placement abroad, computerization of the system to monitor the mobility of women workers overseas, establishment of an overseas jobs agency, particularly for work in the formal sector, increased training and preparation for women migrant workers and greater protection for workers abroad through collaboration with the relevant host country agencies.

10. On the subject of Indonesia's reservation to article 29 (1) of the Convention, by tradition and culture, Indonesia sought to settle disputes through dialogue and consultation among the parties concerned. That reservation, however, in no way affected the Government's serious commitment to implementing the other provisions of the Convention.

11. Mr. WIBADSWO (Indonesia), reporting on the implementation of the Convention on an article-by-article basis, said, in relation to article 2, that the principle of equality between men and women was enshrined in the Pancasila or State philosophy, the 1945 Constitution and the Guidelines of State Policy. Based on those texts, the Government had ratified a number of important international instruments, including the Convention.

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12. Among the obstacles to the achievement of equality for women were the perception by women of their social and economic roles in society and the persistence of social and cultural norms and values that were detrimental to the advancement of women. Other factors, however, such as increased levels of education, the introduction of birth control and family planning methods and the shift from agriculture to industry, did promote increased participation of women in development.

13. In relation to article 3, the main tasks of the national focal point for the advancement of women, the Office of the Minister of State for the Role of Women, were to formulate programmes and policies for enhancing the role of women, to coordinate the activities of sectoral agencies, to monitor and evaluate programme implementation and to submit reports. It carried out those functions to the best of its ability, despite the budget and manpower limitations under which it operated.

14. With reference to article 4, special temporary measures to accelerate equality included literacy programmes, training programmes in a variety of fields and special measures relating to maternity. Other schemes included the provision of small-scale credit to poor rural women without requiring any collateral or security and programmes to increase women's role in small-scale industry.

15. Three types of programmes were being carried out to increase employment opportunities for women: general programmes implemented by sectoral agencies, including programmes to support the development of self-employment; sectoral programmes designed specifically for women; and an integrated sectoral women-in-development programme being coordinated by the Office of the Minister of State for the Role of Women. Special measures to combat violence against women included the integration of training on the legal significance of the Convention into the postgraduate women's studies programme at the University of Indonesia. Moreover, non-governmental organizations provided information and support to victims of violence and operated shelters for battered women and their children. With respect to statistics on women, the Central Bureau of Statistics regularly published disaggregated data on women's labour-force, educational, economic, political and socio-cultural participation.

16. With respect to article 5, the status and roles of men and women in marriage were clearly separated in Indonesian society: the man was the breadwinner and head of the family, while the woman was responsible for maintaining the household. Social attitudes and prejudices in the family, the education system, the workplace, society and the mass media and political life continued to hinder women's full participation. The Government was working to dismantle prejudices and cultural practices that were an obstacle to equality, inter alia by enacting legislation such as the Marriage Act and taking steps to consolidate the implementing regulations of the Act in coordination with relevant ministries and community organizations.

17. With respect to article 6, the Indonesian Government's intervention scheme concerning traffic in women and exploitation of women was based not on any specific act or regulation, but on a number of relevant laws, acts and provisions. The key measures it had undertaken consisted of prevention, social

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rehabilitation, resocialization and development programmes. In addition, it had succeeded in compiling statistical data on prostitution, particularly in provinces which had already been identified as high-risk areas for human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS).

18. With regard to article 7, Indonesian law did not prevent women from standing as candidates for legislative, judicial or executive office. All Indonesian women who were either married or at least 17 years old had the right to vote. Nonetheless, few women participated in political and public life, owing to the influence of traditional social norms. All political parties should try to encourage more women to stand as candidates and should provide them with extra support and assistance. National women's organizations, for their part, should establish subcommittees to act as pressure groups to ensure women's recruitment at all levels.

19. With respect to article 8, Indonesian law did not prohibit or restrict women's participation in the work of international organizations or their eligibility to represent their country in international forums. Indonesian women participated in a number of United Nations bodies, and an Indonesian woman was currently President of the International Council of Women. In addition, women had been included in Indonesia's delegations to major international conferences such as the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights, the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development and the 1995 World Conference on Women. Nonetheless, his Government recognized the need to give more women opportunities to participate in the work of international organizations.

20. Regarding article 9, nationality and citizenship were regulated by several laws, including those covering the position of Indonesian women who married foreigners, individuals born in Indonesia and foreign children adopted by Indonesians.

21. With regard to article 10 of the Convention, the report focused on primary education, which had been compulsory for some time, the education gap between the sexes and government action to develop education. The proportion of boys and girls enrolled in primary schools was currently equal, and the gap between male and female enrolment in all other sectors of education was closing fast.

22. In relation to article 11, the Government's Five-Year Development Plan clearly spelled out the objectives for the advancement of women in the field of employment. Under the law, men and women enjoyed equal rights in connection with labour contracts, for example equal remuneration and the opportunity to initiate legal proceedings. Married women could open bank accounts without the consent of their husbands. Although Indonesian women had the right to choose their profession, few had ventured into traditionally male areas of employment. The various provisions regulating social security and retirement pensions for female workers were continually revised and updated.

23. Regarding article 12, health care in Indonesia was provided by both the public sector and private institutions, under government regulation. The life expectancy of women was greater than that of men, and there had been a gradual decline in infant mortality as a result of the Government's health programmes.

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Notable success had been achieved in the field of family planning. Abortion was not explicitly mentioned in Indonesian legislation, although the law did provide for such a procedure where the life of the mother or baby was in danger. In all other circumstances abortion was banned, and the Government was empowered to take draconian measures against those found guilty of practising it. The Government had also actively promoted a campaign to combat AIDS.

24. In the sphere of social, economic and cultural rights and benefits covered by article 13 of the Convention, Indonesia lacked a comprehensive system of family benefits. Allowances for married women employed in public service whose husbands were also civil servants were paid through the husband for families with up to three children. Women also had the right to seek credit, loans and mortgages, and were fully entitled to participate in cultural and recreational life.

25. The Government's programmes designed to support the advancement of women in rural areas in accordance with article 14 of the Convention were centred around the efforts of the Family Welfare Movement. Other programmes included the Integrated Programme for Enhancing the Role of Women towards Healthy and Prosperous Families, the Programme to Increase the Role of Women in Small Industries, and the Programme for Backward Villages. Women's groups were regarded as key elements in implementing measures to help rural women. Women continued to face problems in gaining access to fertilizers, seeds, credit and information because of the attitude of local officials and the gender bias inherent in agricultural programmes. Male emigration from rural areas had increased the share of agricultural responsibilities borne by de facto female heads of household, but their expanded role had not been adequately recognized by the authorities. The sex-based division of labour within households had resulted in a heavy burden and long working hours for women farmers. While women participated actively in farm work and domestic chores, men's share of housework and child care remained small.

26. With regard to article 15, male and female equality before the law was founded on the concept of Pancasila (the State philosophy) and the 1945 Constitution. The Broad Guidelines of State Policy were issued every five years as the basis for policy formulation and programme planning. Since 1978, equal rights and opportunities for women had been specifically emphasized. The report detailed some of the actions taken by the Government with respect to equality before the law.

27. As far as article 16 of the Convention was concerned, the enactment and amendment of the Act on Marriage had moulded the plurality and diversity of ethics and religion in Indonesia into a set of coherent and obligatory principles applying to all Indonesian citizens regardless of religion or ethnic background. The report contained specific information about a woman's right to keep her maiden name after marriage, the raising of children, the decision to have children, divorce, and issues relating to property and alimony.

28. The Indonesian Government recognized that, despite the existence of legal and constitutional prerequisites for ensuring equality between men and women, cultural norms and practices still hindered women's development. Change was therefore a slow and gradual process. Nevertheless, Indonesia remained

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committed to enhancing the status and role of women as a determining factor in achieving a just and prosperous nation.

29. Turning to the questions contained in the report of the pre-session working group (CEDAW/C/1998/I/CRP.1/Add.3), he said that the periodic report had been prepared by a working group composed of representatives of various government agencies, experts, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and women's organizations.

30. With reference to question 4, the right not to be discriminated against on the basis of sex was guaranteed by the statement in the Constitution that all citizens had the same status under the law, as well as the right to work and to enjoy a reasonable standard of living.

31. In response to question 5, he said that, long before the Fourth World Conference on Women, the Government had sent public officials to study gender issues abroad, had provided gender analysis training at the central and regional levels and had worked to develop gender indicators.

32. With respect to question 6, the country's economic development had given women increased opportunities for employment and loans but the current economic crisis had had a negative impact on both sexes, particularly in the informal sector. Programmes had been developed at the central and regional levels to give women equal access to employment and to create jobs.

33. Regarding question 7 on the legal force of the Guidelines of State Policy, he said that as the product of the People's Consultative Assembly, the country's highest political institution, the Policy represented the people's political and social aspirations. The Guidelines took into account the provisions of the Convention.

34. The five national programmes which made up the national policy for the advancement of women had increased the number of women in the labour force, improved the quality of their health and education, and led to greater participation in child care and household tasks by young married men as well as to the establishment of a management team for the advancement of women at the provincial and district levels. Women's organizations, NGOs and professional societies participated in all stages of those programmes through meetings, workshops and seminars. The obstacles to be overcome included traditional cultural values and a lack of knowledge and expertise with regard to the mainstreaming of a gender perspective into national development programmes. Among the quantifiable goals and deadlines set by the Government were reducing the maternal mortality rate to 80 per 100,000 live births, expanding the Integrated Programme for Enhancing the Role of Women towards Healthy and Prosperous Families (P2W-KSS) at the rate of two villages per subdistrict per year, and lowering the illiteracy rate to 12.01 per cent in rural and 5.04 per cent in urban areas by 1999.

35. In reply to question 9, he said that the Office of the Minister of State for the Role of Women had a limited budget because of its coordinating function; the programme budget for gender and development was considerably larger. Moreover, the National Development Planning Bureau emphasized the need to

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alleviate poverty, from which women were the principal sufferers. In order to assist the Office in its responsibility for policy formulation, coordination, consultation, advocacy, monitoring and evaluation with regard to women in development, management teams for the advancement of women had been established in the various provinces, districts and subdistricts. Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action was discussed at regular meetings between Office officials and the provincial teams and at seminars and workshops organized for the benefit of women's and professional organizations, NGOs, the mass media, experts and academics.

36. The women's studies centres mentioned in question 10 were coordinated at the administrative level by the Ministry of Education and Culture and at the substantive level by the Office of the Minister of State for the Role of Women, and studies carried out by those centres were used in the formulation of provincial policies and programmes.

37. With respect to question 11, the Government's affirmative action measures were implemented through two approaches: women in development, and gender and development. Those measures were binding and were implemented by the Office of the Minister of State for the Role of Women, in cooperation with the National Development Planning Bureau, through training programmes held at the national and district levels for officials of the various ministries. In the long term, the Government planned to take several measures to increase the role of women in political decision-making and their numbers in high-level posts.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.